



**Northgate Community Center and Park  
PAT Meeting #5  
Nov. 3, 2003  
Meeting Notes**

**PAT Members Present:** Shawn Olesen, Sue Geving, Frank Lufkin, Barbara Maxwell, John Cash, Marilyn Firlotte, Velva Maye

**PAT Members Not Present:** William Lowe, LeAnne Cash, Michelle Rupp, Jeanne Hayden

**Staff Present:** Maureen A. O'Neill, NE Parks and Recreation Manager; Tim Motzer, Parks Project Manager; Joelle Ligon, Public Relations Specialist; Marcia Iwasaki, Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

**The Miller-Hull Partnership staff present:** Bob Hull, principal designer; Kurt Stolle, project manager for community center; Mark Brands (Site Workshop), landscape architect

**7:08 p.m. Welcome**

- Tim welcomed everyone. Each team member introduced themselves.
- Tim announced that there had been a change in the schedule. It has been shortened by several months. The accelerated schedule will allow the project to break ground in August, 2004 and be completed in October 2005.

**7:12 p.m. Comments from Visitors**

- There were no visitors.

**7:13 p.m. Discussion from previous week's PAT e-mail exchange**

- PAT member Shawn Olesen wrote an e-mail to group expressing his concern about the small number of parking spaces, and encouraged Parks and Library to alliances with neighboring businesses. He said parking partnership agreements would be highly beneficial. Shawn wanted to go on record as saying he believed that there weren't enough parking spaces.
- Tim said the code requires 64 parking stalls on site, and the current plan calls for 66. Tim agreed that partnerships with neighbors was a highly effective way to get more parking for community center, library and park patrons. He said Parks and the Library are looking into parking possibilities with the property owner to the north.

- During the discussion, at least one PAT member said she didn't like the fact that most of the parking spaces are for compact cars, and that most families drive minivans.
- Also, some PAT members felt that by limiting the number of stalls, visitors to the center would be encouraged to take public transportation or to walk.

### **7:28 p.m. Miller-Hull Partnership Presentation**

- Mark Brand of Site Workshop, the landscape architecture firm for the project, informed the PAT that there will be six or seven drop-off parking spots, in addition to the 66 regular parking spaces.
- The designers moved the whole project as far north as possible in order to make the most of the limited space available. In addition, the Library has been situated directly on the sidewalk in order to meet code regulations in the area. The site was designed to have various access points. The trees on site are consistent with those that will be planted along Fifth Avenue.
- To address the safety needs within the park, a barrier, seating wall has been designed. It also makes the entrances to the park more friendly.
- Designers focused on making the spaces within the park as flexible as possible. The park area will be a perfect place for an outdoor venue. It could accommodate up to a few thousand people. There will also be an electricity outlet and other infrastructure in the park to facilitate outdoor events.
- The plaza will support a string of activities from the library to the community center and onto the open space.
- Stormwater management on the site has been very carefully considered. There are two functioning landscapes on the site, called rain gardens. Storm water is collected at the north end of site and delivered to the rain gardens via a grated trench. In addition, the site is now mostly impervious surface. Developing the site will add more pervious surface. (At the Nov. 5 public meeting, designers said the site is now 72 percent impervious surface. Developing the site will reduce impervious surface to 50 percent.) Also, development will ensure installation of an eco-friendly stormwater management system, which doesn't exist now.
- ADA access: there will be three ADA parking stalls. Most grades on the site are less than 5 percent. ADA access to the site from the west and southwest is very good.

- Visibility of the buildings: while the rain garden may obscure the community center slightly, it will shade the west-facing windows in the summer time. Also, tree limbs can be cut high to ensure better site lines into the buildings.
- On the new drawings, the daycare area has a small kids' garden in the front.
- Some of the rooms were revamped in the new drawings. The rooms have been reconfigured to reflect the input from the previous Miller-Hull presentation to the PAT, including better visibility from the reception desk into the western rooms and interoperability of the rooms.
- Designers are looking at installing seating along the corridor that leads into the community center.
- They looked into the storage under the kitchen possibility and determined that that wasn't a possibility because of budget constraints. The group asked if additional storage could go under the child-care area at the north end of the lot. Tim asked that the building be designed so that if good construction bids came in, storage under the child-care area. They also were not able to reconfigure the kitchen so that it would open onto the multipurpose room and the gym.
- The stage option that Miller-Hull was asked to look at before will not be a possibility to build in. They offered that a portable stage might be a good option. They also noted that there was no room for bleachers in the gym.
- Miller-Hull is researching the possibility of open windows on the community center's west side. At this point, with where the bus stop lets off and picks up, there is too much noise. If Metro moves the bus stop further north, as they are talking about doing, it should not be a problem to install windows that open and close.
- They are working on differentiating the south entrance with a permanent bench. An area at the north of the community center, under the overhang is a place where a coffee cart could be located. It will be plumbed with a water hook up and electrical outlet.
- The designer indicated that the size of the gym had been reduced by 600 square feet from what was shown in the program offset the need for additional circulation space. The revised gym size is still consistent with the current Parks Department standard for gyms.

## **8:40 p.m. Interaction between PAT and Miller-Hull**

- PAT Members had the following questions and comments:
  - Can there be an audiovisual screen or the option for an audiovisual screen?
  - Need for power to support stage lighting/audiovisual for events on the open space area.
  - The community center will need internet hook ups throughout.
  - There was a safety concern about the lack of fencing adjacent to the play area. (Mark Brand from Site Workshop said that it would be a visual barrier. The low- wall seating should help safety.)
  - Will the planned 5,000 square foot expansion of the library be a visual barrier to the community center? (Yes, some. But the site can be tweaked some to accommodate the new library when that day comes.)
  - There was a concern about safety issues within the rain garden. With the cover of trees, there could be nefarious activity. (Vegetation will be both low and high and all efforts are being made to ensure safety for park users.)
  - One PAT member said that while not everyone likes skateboarders, they will be at the site a lot, so why not just make the area accessible for them? Some on the PAT agreed with this idea; others did not.
  - PAT members would like both a stage and more storage.
  - Please “jazz up” the south entrance.
  - Some are still concerned about balls and Frisbees going out into traffic. A suggestion of a vegetative fence was made.
  - Is it possible to offer some ventilation for the back offices?
  - Can the plaza between the buildings be covered? (Designers recommended against this, as they believe it will interrupt the existing flow of the park.)
  - Many on the project advisory team commended the designers for their work, and said that they were over all quite pleased with the results.
  - PAT members wanted to know if some of the walls within the community center could have art on them. (Marcia Iwasaki said that with the City’s rotating art exhibit, it was certainly possible to do that.)

- Another member wanted to know if the site could have artistic manhole covers. (Marcia said that she would look into it – that it was a possibility.)
- They noted a need for seating as visitors come into the north entrance for people to sit on while they are waiting to be picked up.
- They also would like to see a separate corridor off the south entrance accessible to users of the patio.
- There were also concerns about the expansion of the library and the impact of the park. There was interest in seeing revisions that could minimize the impact of an expansion.

### **9:05 p.m. Final Meeting Wrap-up**

- The group will meet again on Monday, Jan. 26, 2004 to review 60 percent design documents.

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